The

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## Notes of the Month.

We would draw the attention of our readers to the Sunday School Conference which this year is to be held at Moneyrea on Saturday, June 5th. The best possible arrangements will be made to facilitate the transit from Belfast to Moneyrea and back. It must be remembered, however, that the abnormal conditions will obtain which told against a large attendance last year. Those who are seriously interested in the work of the Sunday Schools will not be deterred by difficulties, but will endeavour to make the Conference a complete success. The general subject to be treated is : " The Importance of the Sunday School," and three speakers have been asked to deal briefly with special aspects of the general theme. Mr. Percy Andrews, of Comber, will speak as a Layman of many years' practical experience as a teacher in one of our largest schools. The Rev. G. L. Phelps, of Holywood, will deal with " The Importance of the Sunday School to our churches," while the Rev. H. J. Rossington will take as his subject " The Importance of the Sunday School to the Community." All these topics are so important and timely that their treatment should specially appeal and be responsible for a helpful discussion. May all who possibly can determine to be at Moneyrea on June 5th.

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The North of Ireland was numerically fairly well represented at the National Conference in Leeds last month. Undoubtedly more persons would have made the journey but for the expense it necessarily entailed. Those who went had reason to be thankful, for the services and meetings proved most interesting and stimulating. Never was the fellowship of scattered workers more in evidence, and the meeting together of long-severed friends was a joyous experience. The years of war had intervened since last many of them held counsel together, while many who used to be present had made the great sacrifice. We thought of them with mingled pride and grief during the solemn service of Commemoration and Consecration in Mill Hill Chapel. We felt that our churches and schools had played no unimportant part in the great work of freeing the world from an oppression and presumptuous attempt at world dominion. Yet the thought of the future and its opening opportunities of peaceful penetration was in our hearts, as we earnestly sought to prepare ourselves for, and make ourselves worthy of, such opportunities of service for God

and man. Upon the churches and all similar institutions a great responsibility rests, and will increasingly rest, and we who have dedicated ourselves to their duties must re-consecrate ourselves thereto, and trust that we may indeed become fellow-labourers with God. Certainly the Conference left us all with a more heartfelt desire to do our part in reconciling the world of unrest and evil with God and His righteousness.

* *

One of the most noteworthy utterances at the Conference was the sermon delivered at a largely attended service in Mill Hill Chapel, by the Rev. J. H Weatherall, M.A., of London. Hence we have pleasure in announcing that the preacher who then stirred our hearts so deeply has promised to deliver the Annual Lecture for our Non-Subscribing gatherings in June. Mr. Weatherall is one of our ablest and most earnest ministers, and should be assured of a hearty welcome and a very large audience when he comes to the North of Ireland. We should further make it our endeavour to increase the usefulness of our Annual Meetings. They might become what the Conference Meetings were in Leeds—a source of stimulus and encouragement in our common work. While certain routine business has to be done, the meetings do not exist merely for that end, but for the generating of spiritual power and influence. Let us one and all make them serve the higher and more spiritual purpose of our chuch polity.

## THE CHURCH AND THE AGE.

Judged—perhaps unfairly—by the standards usually applied to secular organisations, the Christian Church would seem to be under a cloud. That it is merely a passing one need not be doubted by anyone who has studied history. The Church has been at a much lower ebb in England than it is at present—in the eighteenth century, for instance—and, though there is every reason why its adherents should seek the causes underlying its apparent ineffectiveness as an influence upon the lives of the multitude, there is no justification for undue pessimism. Nor, in our minds, has a case been made out for a herterodox policy which shall transform the Church into a tepid imitation of a cheap club.

It is doubtless discouraging for the ministers and clergy who have striven to prepare a message which they think is needed, and should be acceptable, to find less than a score of people assembled to hear it. But it would be a capital mistake to lower the high standard of Christian teaching and practice in order merely to attract the heedless and thereby temporarily improve the Church's balance sheet. "Autres temps, autres mœurs" is a good enough motto in its way, and the Church must be alive to the needs of the age. The Cinema Mission movement shows that this fact has not been lost sight of, and if the scheme can be carried through on sound and artistic lines—with not too much "adorning of the tale"—it may do much to influence unthinking minds rarely occupied with anything but the trivial and mundane.

But we doubt the wisdom of too drastic attempts to popularise and cheapen the services of the Church. We believe its sacred responsibility is not one that includes the gratification of jejune tastes. In this connection we think the Church would be wise to refuse to accede to the suppositious demand for facilities for dancing. Not that there is anything wrong in dancing. It is a delightful and innocuous pastime, and Christian people have every right to indulge in it at their leisure. But we are not convinced that it is any but the expression of a shallow sentiment that would add to a pastor's multifarious duties that of master of ceremonies at a jazz show. Nor do we believe the majority of people expect such work of him.—"The Yorkshire Observer."

## LIBERAL RELIGION.

Reference this month is made to the National Conference. The term "Liberal Christian" occurs in its

somewhat long title. A Scotch minister says that Liberal Christianity only means "informed" Christianity. Wider knowledge has made everywhere a change in theology. Teachings that once were prominent, such as "Flee from the wrath to come," have gone into the background, and what Christ really did say in his sermons is being given greater heed to. At an ordination dinner recently among orthodox Presbyterians, a minister representing our Church, said that whatever the theological differences, as Presbyterians we were united on the fundamental principle "civil and religious liberty all the world over." This sentiment did not realise much response; it is this, however, that makes a Presbyterian or a Methodist, or anyone else, a "Liberal Christian." It would make a Jew a Liberal Jew, a Buddhist a Liberal Buddhist, a Mahommedan, Hindu, Parsee, Sikh, Jain, a Liberal in his own religion. If a Unitarian were narrow and exclusive, declining to consider anyone else's view, he would not be a Liberal Christian. It is not disloyal to our own religion to admire the good in others any more than it is disloyal to our own family to appreciate sobriety, industry, thrift, good manners in another family.

Is "Liberal Religion" quite a correct term to use? "Religion" and "religions" are not quite the same. Is not Religion summed up in the words "Thy will be done"? "Religions" are many; they are the forms and communities belonging to the great Teachers and often named accordingly. These again are split into sects and denominations, and their tenets are called Theology. Theodore Parker said that theology was men's thought about religion, and was no more to be confounded with it than the stars with astronomy. Liberal Christians are not necessarily all Unitarians. Martineau said of the doctrine of the Trinity that it was the least objectionable part of the orthodox system, and wrote an essay "The way out of the Trinitarian controversy." In our midst we have Free Catholics, one of the leaders being the Rev. Lloyd Thomas, of Birmingham. In the Church of England there are "Liberal Catholics," who want to take communion in the same way as is done in many of our churches, by sitting round tables, so perhaps we may call ourselves "Liberal Catholics." There is, however, a Liberal Catholic Church which is making headway and which is a continuation of the old Roman Catholic Church which had its home in Holland, and for centuries was free from the Papal obedience. It keeps the ancient forms though it has pruned the Mass of a good deal that is not in keeping with Liberal thought. It is attractive to those who are strongly attached to the ancient forms, but still want to keep abreast with the times. Catholic is a good word, badly besmirched, and means Universal. It should stand for everything that is generous, tolerant and enlightened. Unfortunately it has been made the opposite. The Liberal Catholic Church aims at combining the best in Catholicism and Protestantism. It classes the creeds with the scriptures as the basis of faith, but permits the widest measure of liberty in their interpretation. "It is not our business to amend ancient documents." These are therefore kept in their present form until the whole church shall unanimously consent to deal with them.

"The free recognition of this 'right to interpret' cuts away a moral and intellectual canker which is eating at the heart of modern Church life."

—ULLIN.

## TEMPERANCE NOTES.

Temperance advocates have often been accused of wild exaggeration in their descriptions of what would happen if intoxicating drinks could be banished from the land. There is now no need of drawing upon the imagination, America has gone 'dry' and there is abundant evidence of the effects of prohibition. Enquiries were recently addressed to the Governors of States as to the effect of prohibition and thirty-one replies have been received, all favourable. Here are some typical examples.

"Arizona has tried prohibition from the 1st January, 1915, but since the time of its first adoption had an opportunity, two years later, to again voice its approval or disapproval of the prohibition amendment, the result being the enactment of a more stringent law by a vastly increased vote. Crime has steadily diminished, and there has been general prosperity resulting from the absence of the sale and drinking of liquor. The standard of living has risen, and where money once went for whiskey and other intoxicants, it is now being spent for the support of formerly neglected families, and in other sane and right directions."

The Governor of Mississippi State writes, "I am safe in saying that not one-fourth as much crime is committed as formerly, when whiskey and intoxicants could be obtained. Drunkenness is, of course, a negligible quantity, because the drink to intoxicate cannot be had. Mississippi is thoroughly satisfied with the workings of prohibition, and, if put to a vote now, at least seventy-five per cent. of our people would endorse it. Of course money formerly spent for whiskey now goes into the legitimate channels for the purchase of the necessities and many of the luxuries of life." (Mississippi went dry in 1909).

From Pennsylvania with a population of over eight millions comes the reply, "The diminishment in crime has been one of the striking results of prohibition. Our jails are becoming tenantless, and our criminal courts are having their work lessened to a remarkable degree."

These are not the exaggerations of fanatics but the hard facts as given by the highest officials of the States, and all the replies are of a like kind.

The severest test of prohibition is in New York City with its teeming population. Prohibition became effective here in July, 1919. The Commissioner of Charities, Mr. B. S. Coler, who had not been in favour of prohibition, says, "Since 1st July our ambulance service is down 25 per cent. The showing of prohibition in our work has been phenomenal—much greater than I expected." Five years ago the Municipal Lodging House, which is one of Mr. Coler's institutions, was packed with from 1,500 to 1,800 inmates. On February 9th, 1920, while New York was snowed under, there were only 36 inmates. The President of the Brevoort Savings Bank says, "There is no doubt about it a number of people have come to us to say that this is the first money they have ever saved, and that before prohibition all their excess earnings went into drink." The President of the Bowery Savings Bank says, "I do not doubt that prohibition has had a great deal to do with our increased savings deposits." And here is a summing up of the matter from an American paper, "The cold truth is that New York's acceptance of prohibition, the beneficent results of the law, and the high average of efficiency in administration of the law constitute an eighth wonder. Here is a city drawn from the four corners of the earth, representing every tongue, and every degree of lawless inclination, a city of sports and hooligans as well as a city of business genius and patriotism. And that city is dry. The lights still blaze on Broadway, the restaurants are just as merry, the hotels are packed to the doors and profiteer shamelessly, the theatres are full and running over, the sporting contests are mobbed by throngs of ticket buyers, business is at its peak of activity from Wall Street to the corner grocery of 7th Avenue, 5th Avenue is full of motor cars and furs and diamonds. They said the people of New York would not submit to prohibition, but they have. They said that it would make the city a dull imitation of its former splendour, but it hasn't. They said the workingmen would not work without beer, but they are doing it. Prohibition has made two changes in New York City; first, the city is more prosperous because of it, and second, the city is less lawless because of it."

These facts speak for themselves. Prohibition may or may not be practical politics in the United Kingdom, but for the sake of economy, of efficiency,

of the moral and religious welfare of the people, the Drink question will have to be tackled far more strenuously and seriously than ever before. In America the churches took the lead in this matter. Let us also be up and doing.

## GEORGE BORROW, Author and Traveller.

By Mr. A. Orr, Comber.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I hesitated to speak to you on this Subject to-night, one of the chief objections being, that Borrow is not a well-known writer, albeit, he has taken his place amongst the great names in English literature. Now, I understand that Ruskin when he was lecturing, frequently asked his audience some very pertinent questions, requesting them to signify by a show of hands, how many of them agreed with some of his perhaps rather startling statements.

Taking a hint from him, I will ask such of you as have read anything of Borrow, to be good enough to hold up your hand. I see I am indeed speaking to the uninitiated—No matter—who knows but I may interest some of you so far as to glance at his writings and you may yet become inoculated with the Borrow Microbe, and find that you belong to the company of his admirers and lovers; according to a well-known writer, a queer tribe it is, composed of "saints and sinners," gentle and simple, master and man, mistress and maid, of those who, learned in the tongues have read everything else, and of those who have read nothing else, and don't want to."

Another objection, and it has not been dispelled by the voting is, I have an uneasy feeling that to some people Borrow can be deadly dull; another, that he is by no means the wearer of a halo to people who are keen on social reform, and that includes almost everybody nowadays.

He was not for instance, convinced that Tee-totalism is a cure for all the ills that flesh is heir to, and did not ever seem to be interested in the housing question; but was content to take life as he found it, his only panacea being Protestant and Evangelical religion, of the brand that is nowhere found excepting the Church of England. However, it has been said that the only monument an artist desires is the proclaiming of his works, and this man deserves a monument; so, in that spirit I address you.

The Subject of my sketch was born in 1803, near the Old City of Norwich, not far from the birthplace of Nelson, and he died in 1881 at Oulton, in Suffolk. In person, he was over 6 feet in height, broad, and well made, and his portraits suggest a fine figure of a man, with brown eyes, and a handsome clean shaven face, somewhat reminiscent of Oliver Goldsmith, though he had more regular features.

He was very athletic, a good rider, fond of swimming, and addicted to long walks.

Our senior minister met him in London on one occasion, and thereby hangs a tale; by the way, what a lot of famous people Mr. Dunkerley has met, to name a few, Miss Frances Power Cobbe, John Bright, Gladstone, W. T. Stead, John Morley, Lord Pirrie, John Stuart Mill, Lloyd George. Mr. Dunkerley also was a pupil of the great Martineau, besides during a long ministry, being acquainted with all the eminent men and women who composed this congregation.

Well, our friend told me that on one occasion he met Borrow at a reception in London, and among the guests was that ornament of Unitarianism Miss Frances Power Cobbe. She asked Mr. Dunkerley to come to her house a few days later to meet Borrow, Mr. Dunkerley went, but the guest of the evening was an absentee. It came out afterwards that Borrow became aware that Martineau had also been invited.

Now Martineau was another Norwich man, somewhat Borrow's senior, and they had been at school together; in those days it was customary for the older boys to be asked by the school master to chastise the younger ones

for their delinquencies, and Martineau on one occasion had fulfilled this office with Borrow; whether he laid it on with too heavy a hand, or whether—which I suspect was the case—the younger boy had such keen sensibilities that he suffered more than most people, the fact was that Borrow never forgave the eminent Unitarian divine, and ever after avoided him as much as possible.

The father of our author hailed from Cornwall, in that part of Great Britain which the late Lord Salisbury included in what he called the Celtic Fringe, and his mother was of French extraction, which may perhaps account for his personality, as any one more unlike my idea of the typical Englishman never existed.

The Borrow family consisted of two boys, of whom George was the younger, and as I have observed is frequently the case with the youngest, he was always his mother's favourite; who was wont to take his part when his father complained that he neglected business to interest himself in Literature.

Their home life seems to have been very happy, and George was a good son, honouring his father and his mother, and speaking in terms of the highest admiration of his elder brother who became an artist and died young—while his account of the death of his father is claimed to be a masterpiece in literature.

His father was a non-commissioned officer in the West Norfolk Militia, and as they travelled about a good deal, the boy saw lots of adventures, turning them to good account in his writings, which abound in anecdotes of all kinds. This had the disadvantage, however, of interfering with his education—he changed schools so frequently, and (as he was always poor) he was like Burns and Patrick McGill, practically self-taught. When we remember that he is said to have known twenty languages it gives us some idea of his industry and determination.

He was, as the Gypsies foretold, a great traveller, and journeyed through practically every European country, except perhaps Norway and Sweden; bear in mind there were no railways in those days, and the choice was coach, horseback, or on foot.

If anyone wants to read of the doings of High Society, I advise him or her not to turn to Borrow, as this is not at all in his line, on the contrary his writings are chuck full of the doings of Gypsies—The Rommany Chals and Rommany Chies as he calls them, Tramps, Pedlars, Ostlers, and, the truth must be told—prize fighters, an art in which he was himself by no means deficient.

Gypsydom, whether practised by a strange people or whatever remains of it are found in our artificial society was his cult, in this he lived and moved and had his being.

He is a master of vivid narrative, using a vigorous diction of simple, homely English, and his genius is shown by the fact that he can interest one in the most humble people and events,—Shakespeare needs kings and queens, statesmen and soldiers to play their parts, but this man can make the simplest incident bright and appealing, the company he meets with on his walking tours of which he was prodigiously fond, and the conversation he records with workmen, strolling fiddlers, the poor woman he met in Wales, who said " I am Irish your honour, I was born in Scotland Road, Manchester."

I say the conversation recorded is amusing and frequently instructive, told with such zeal as to make the story exciting as the accounts of the explorations of Livingstone or Stanley.

Though he saw much of the seamy side of life, one gets no flavour of it, rather of high spirits, cheerfulness, and good fellowship; he extolls the attractions of an open air life, and the charms of the wind and the heath. He was decidedly unconventional, though contrary to much of this class of literature, his pages reveal conduct which is never inconsistent with the actions of a gentleman, using the word in its proper sense.

A striking peculiarity about his writing is, that even his admirers cannot account for its charm—one has one explanation and another something else. Oddly enough, whilst failure to appreciate and to enjoy the favourite author of one's friend usually leads to a weakening of sympathy; no such feeling is engendered in Borrow's case. His admirers can listen unmoved to their nearest and dearest proclaiming that they see next to no merit in him, and forgive them whole-heartedly for their want of appreciation. One of his chief features in his independence of character, in his direst need, he will accept favours from no one, neither the rich Francis Ardrey, nor the poor gypsies, who both offered to befriend him.

Another enigma is, that though he was in the main dogmatic, he is entirely free from the charge of writing with a purpose, and disclaims that Lavengro was written to further the protestant religion. He is not blind to the failings of those with whom he associated, but like most great artists pictures life as he found it, leaving us to draw our own moral; and is unique in that he follows no model in style, nor has he left any successor.

He is never consciously humorous, unless it be so subtle that I have missed it, though he is frequently tragic, but mostly a smile is never far from the lips of the reader, as his situations are often decidedly comical, while his writings are remarkably free from satire.

He left no pithy sayings like Mark Twain, and is hard to quote, as his works are so inter-connected.

He is intensely patriotic, fond of Horses, and like most Englishmen, has a good deal to say about his victuals.

His chief aversions are Sir Walter Scott and the Pope, while, being a loyal member of the Church of England, he is very severe on Radicals and Dissenters.

Well, Radicals and Dissenters are, like other people, not any better than they should be, and, like most of my audience, I can stand a good deal being said against the Pope, but while it is to be expected that there would be natural antagonism between a man like Borrow, and Scott, the head of the Romantic School, the language he uses about the author of the Waverley Novels is shocking, and not to be excused by his estimate of Scott as what? the greatest poet with one exception that Europe has produced for 200 years, and his telling us he paid a visit to Scott's tomb, out of regard for his genius.

(To be continued).

## MEMORIAL NOTICE.

### DR. PINKERTON,

We chronicle with extreme regret the death of Dr. James Pinkerton, M.D., M.Ch., which took place at his residence, 72 Banks Road, West Kirby, on February 16th.

Dr. Pinkerton, who went into practice in Birkenhead about 32 years ago, took his degrees with honours at Queen's College, Royal University of Ireland, and held two exhibitions during his college career. For 21 years Dr. Pinkerton was Hon. Medical officer to the Wirral Children's Hospital, being also Hon. Surgeon to the Birkenhead Eye and Ear Hospital. His retirement in 1909 was much regretted by an extensive clientele in Birkenhead. Since then the Doctor had resided in West Kirby. His energetic nature would not be reconciled to the leisure of complete retirement, hence without forming a definite practice, much of his time was professionally occupied whilst residing here. He was one of the Hon. Medical officers connected with the Children's Convalescent Home, and during the war acted as school Medical officer under the Liverpool Corporation.

He was held in high esteem by his fellow practitioners in the district, whom he represented on the Cheshire Panel Committee. Somewhat reserved in his manner he bore his student habits to the end. He was a gentleman of wide culture and gentle disposition, always ready

to think the best of his friends. An earnest member of the Free Church (Unitarian) at Grange Road, he will be much missed in a congregation where he enjoyed great popularity.

Failing health confined him almost entirely to the house for the last six months, though it was only in the latter weeks that he took to his bed. During his illness he was devotedly attended by his life-long friend, Dr. McAfee.

He leaves a widow, two sons and one daughter to mourn his demise. The eldest son, Dr. Paul B. Pinkerton, follows the profession of his father, qualifying for his degree just previous to his departure for German East Africa in 1917, where he saw service in that campaign, from which he was invalided home.

Never robust, Dr. Pinkerton bore his ill-health with truly Christian fortitude. His thought was all for others, his courtly and gentle manner was the reflection of a character full of that nobility which leans to all that is best in life. In such memory may those who mourn find consolation.

The funeral took place at Flaybrick-hill cemetery, on Thursday, previous to which a service was held in the Free Church, Grange Road, West Kirby, which was impressively conducted by the Rev. Charles Roper, B.A. There was a goodly number present, including the Rev. P. M. Kirkland, Rev. Eric. F. Robson, Dr. W. McAfee, Dr. Duncan McAfee, Dr. McIntyre Brown, Dr. A. Moss, Messrs. A. V. Paton, G. H. Steveni, and I. Slade.

## UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

### Annual Meeting.

The annual meeting of the Ulster Unitarian Association was held on 19th April, in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street—Rev. J. A. Kelly presiding.

Rev. G. J. Slipper submitted the annual report, which stated that the operations of the Society had been fully maintained. Whilst much of the work was unobtrusively fulfilled it was not possible to guage the practical results accruing from it. The Depository had proved a most useful agency. With larger support it would be possible to help their weaker causes in a practical way. The Committee recorded with regret the death of some of their staunch supporters, including Mr. John Gibson, Dunmurry, and Mr. John Drummond, Larne, long-standing and loyal supporters of the cause of Unitarianism.

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. C. J. M'Kisack, submitted his report, which showed a credit balance, and said it would be desirable that some of the congregations who paid nothing should give a little towards the support of the Association.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report and statement of accounts and a resolution of thanks to the collectors and Treasurer, said if they realised the importance of the Depository and the work the Association was striving to do dozens of new subscribers would come in each year. As regarded missionary effort they should look to their weaker causes nearer home. They were glad to see Mr. and Mrs. Woolley present, and he trusted the members of York Street would support their minister. The rules of the Association had been more than justified, and he congratulated the Society on its present sound position. (Applause).

Rev. E. H. Pickering, in seconding, said the faith for which they stood was more needed than ever. The Depository was most useful for the dissemination of the sort of literature they wanted. One thing that they would miss if the Society ceased to exist would be the Depository. He hoped the Society would continue for that reason alone apart from the fact that it stood for a great cause. (Applause).

A vote of thanks to the Rev. H. J. Rossington for having preached the annual sermons on Sunday on behalf of the Association was passed, on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Rev. G. J. Slipper. They all knew, Mr. Slipper said, the staunch way Mr. Rossington spread the Unitarian

Christian faith. They regretted that Rev. C. M. Wright had been unable to preach, and were very much indebted to Mr. Rossington for stepping into the breach.

Rev. H. J. Rossington, in returning thanks, said he was not satisfied with the Association and what they were doing, and he was dissatisfied because he was an idealist first and a realist second. That was a missionary Association without the real Missionary spirit. (Hear, hear.) It was not the fault of the Association ; it was the fault of the churches, of which the Association should be the effective organ. There were some things a Church could not do for itself ; it needed an arm and an instrument, and that Association might be made a more effective instrument than it had been in the past. They should begin with themselves, and the question he wanted to ask was—Was their Unitarianism something that they individually valued ? If all members had a spirit of aspiration, devotion, and consecration what a living centre their Church would be. He saw no reason why that Association should not do greater work than it had done hitherto It was for the members of the churches to do it, to see the urgency of it, and to send forth men and women to take their part in it. The world never needed religion so much as now, and he believed it, it never needed their religion so much as it did now. (Applause.)

Mrs. Davies moved a resolution that the meeting renewed its adherence to the principles and objects of the Association, and strongly commended it to the increased support of its friends, as well as the general public.

Rev. J. G. Davies, in seconding, said that the war had brought people face to face with the sternest and cruellest realities that the mind could imagine, and what was the result ? It was that the men who had faced danger, wounds, and death broke away from the trammels of the old creeds and dogmas and adopted a new, simple faith which one of the leading chaplains described as unformulated Unitarianism.

The resolution was passed.

The office-bearers and Committee for the ensuing year were re-elected, and the proceedings concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chairman and the tea-makers at the tea prior to the business proceedings, on the proposition of Rev. M. Watkins, seconded by Mr. W. Greenfield.

## LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of instruction for 1920, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

*May 2nd. Do right at once.* Matthew viii. 18-22. Key text, Luke ix. 62. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."

Like this scribe many people to-day are willing to follow Jesus without realising all that it involves. Jesus wants not only willingness but also steadfastness of purpose which is not turned aside by any difficulties or dangers.

"The Son of man hath not where to lay his head." The words 'Son of man' do not here refer to Jesus who at this period was not hunted by his enemies ; they refer to the ideal man. In the world as it is the good man is often homeless and persecuted, but being true to the highest and the best must be put before considerations of safety or comfort.

Tell the story of the Pilgrim Fathers who sailed for New England just 300 years ago. Also the 2,000 ejected ministers of 1662.

"Leave the dead to bury their own dead." These words are more difficult. The Jews laid great stress on duty to parents ; what Jesus means is that duty to God is even more important, and that if the two clash, duty to God must come first. There is also the possible meaning that we should cut ourselves adrift from the past when matters of present interest call for our whole attention. In the parallel passage in Luke, the answer given by Jesus is the key text quoted above. If the man who is ploughing looks back he cannot plough straight. Jesus does not want anybody to be unkind to

their parents or to be unfeeling with regard to the dead, but he takes an extreme example and points out that always first things must come first. Neither family ties nor old associations must be allowed to interfere with duty. Jesus is himself an example in this matter. His own mother and brothers thought he was beside himself and wished to keep him at home out of danger, but much as he loved them he would not allow them to turn him aside from his purpose. If Jesus and the early Christians had waited till they had first got their relatives to side with them there would never have been any Christian religion. When any duty presents itself it must have the first claim upon us; if we begin to make excuses or to procrastinate we shall neglect the duty.

*May 9th. The Children in the Market-Place.* Matthew xi. 16-19.

Although Jesus said "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven," he knew that they had their faults. All children like playing at being men and women, girls with their dolls and boys with their toy engines have great fun pretending to be grown up. But sometines, no matter what game is suggested, there are some who have the sulks and will not join in. This spoils the fun for all the rest. The Jewish children at the time of Jesus played at weddings and funerals, but some days they would not join in either.

Jesus tells the grown-up folks that they are sometimes like sulky children. John the Baptist had been austere, what we should call a Puritan, and they thought him a fanatic and would not follow him because he was too strict; Jesus was a friend of sinners and they would not follow him because he was not strict enough. When the children would neither play one game nor the other it showed that they were not inclined for play, and when the people would neither listen to John nor Jesus, it showed that they were not inclined to be religious.

There are two lessons here. First, don't sulk, it spoils the fun for yourself and for others. Don't always want your own way, but let there be some give and take. This applies not only to our games but also to the serious business of life. Second, don't imagine that your way of doing a thing is the only way or even the best. Some very earnest people are intolerant of any methods but their own, like the disciples who objected to devils being cast out by those who did not follow Jesus, but Jesus was wiser. He knew that the important thing is the casting out of devils, the overcoming of evil, and as long as that was done the name people took or the methods they employed did not matter. "Wisdom is justified by her works." Don't stand aside criticising others but lend a hand to the work of making the world a better and happier place.

*May 16th. The Mother and Brethren of Jesus.* Matthew xii. 46-50. Key text, verse 50.

In this passage we are told that his mother and his brothers wanted to speak with him, but in Mark's gospel it says "they went out to lay hold on him, for they said, He is beside himself." This affords an explanation of what would otherwise have looked like unkindness on the part of Jesus. They did not understand him and thought they would be doing him a good turn by turning him aside from his purpose and saving him from the dangers of his calling. It was not that Jesus loved them less but that he loved truth and right more. During the war many a young man put the claims of his country before the wishes of his family. Not many years ago the son of a rich brewer was so impressed by the evil wrought by strong drink that he determined to give up the prosperous business he had inherited and devote himself to the cause of temperance. To his family he seemed mad and his conduct seemed also to cast a reflection upon their conduct, but he put what he felt to be the right before considerations for his family. Whenever Christianity has spread to new regions there have been many cases in which the convert has had to face the hostility of his family, but when it is a matter of

conscience the ties of kindred must give way. It is very hard when this choice has to be made, that Jesus found it hard we have many signs in the gospels, but it must always be remembered that there are other ties as well; those who are united by a common desire to be faithful to truth and duty, to do the will of the Father who is in heaven, are a brotherhood.

The many years spent at home by Jesus before he began his public work and his tender thought for his mother in his last moments of suffering are proof sufficient of his love. That he would not allow this so strong love to keep him from doing God's will only increases our reverence for him.

*May 23rd. Whit Sunday Lesson.* Acts ii. 1-21. Key text, verse 17.

Pentecost is the Feast of Harvest, the Day of First-Fruits. For the first Christians Pentecost was a Day of First-Fruits because on that day the first fruits of the teaching of Jesus became manifest. The reason of this is clear. Since the crucifixion the disciples had scattered, but in the minds of all the words and works of the Master had been working like leaven, and now they met again at Jerusalem. Naturally the old memories were brought back with extra vividness as they were once more in Jerusalem and their meeting together brought it all to a head. They were filled with the Spirit, a new enthusiasm possessed them, they began to see clearly the way of duty. When they yielded to this new feeling and spake as the Spirit gave them utterance they found that they were understood of the people, for they were addressing themselves to common human needs and appealing to common human aspiration.

With this sense of power there came also the sense of opportunity, for there were gathered together at Jerusalem for the feast, people from all parts and their message would be carried broad cast by their hearers.

How Pentecost became Whit Sunday. Whit Sunday means white Sunday, and it is called white Sunday because of the white costumes worn by those who are being received into Church membership. Young people who had arrived at an age when they could take upon themselves the duties and responsibilities of full membership together with older folk who were converts went through a sort of confirmation service, and Pentecost was the chosen day because it was the Day of First-Fruits and the day when the disciples experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit.

When we surrender ourselves to the influence of Jesus and let his spirit work in us we experience an increase of spiritual insight and not only have visions of what should be, but also added power to do and to endure for the realisation of them.

*May 30th. Parables of the Kingdom.* Matthew xiii. 31-33. 44-48.

The kingdom of heaven means the sovereignty of God. We generally think of heaven as the state of the blessed after death, but in the term 'kingdom of heaven' it is synonymous with God. The sovereignty of God is unaffected by death. Kingship, to be real and effective, must be acknowledged and acted upon by the subject as well as the monarch, hence the kingdom of heaven is within.

'The mustard seed.' Though not actually 'less than all seeds' the mustard seed was a proverbial expression for anything very small. Great results follow from small beginnings. "Those that with haste will make a mighty fire begin it with weak straws." Tell of Augustine and the few monks who brought Christianity to England, and of William Lloyd Garrison and the beginnings of the abolition of slavery. We need not expect to be able to completely overcome all our faults at once, but we can begin with little deeds of kindness.

'The leaven.' The spirit of Jesus in our hearts will do more to regenerate the world than all improvements of outward circumstances. John Pounds, the Portsmouth cobbler, quietly went on teaching ragged children in his humble workshop, and his example led to the founding of the Ragged School Movement which has helped thousands of unfortunate children.

'The hidden treasure,' and 'the pearl of great price.' No sacrifice is too great in order to secure the really valuable things in life. "Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing; 'twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands; but he that filches from me my good name robs me of that which not enriches him but leaves me poor indeed." The kingdom of heaven the kingship of God in our hearts, is the really valuable thing, for the sake of which we should be ready 'in our joy' to give up everything else if needs be. St. Francis gave up a life of wealth and pleasure and chose poverty, but was himself happier and did more for the world than if he had not made the sacrifice. Even those who have suffered death for truth and right have felt that they chose the better part. We should have sufficient faith to make the little sacrifices we are called upon to make well knowing that a clear conscience and a kind heart more than balance all things else.

## Reports.

**Ballyhemlin.**—A large gathering in connection with the Guild took place in the Orange Hall, Ballyhalbert, on the night of April 8th. Songs, music and dances made up the programme of the evening.

**Clough.**—The members of Clough and Annadorn Sunday Schools were recently presented with valuable and beautiful books, which were the generous gifts of Mr. John M'Cammon. The prizes were distributed—in Clough by Mrs. S. Robinson, and tea was supplied by Mrs. Hay and Mrs. Davies; and in Annadorn the prizes were distributed by Mrs. J. M'Cammon. A manse was bought last summer by the Congregation which cost them over a £1,000. By collections among themselves they have raised practically £400. In order to pay off the remaining £600, various efforts are being made at present—social functions and dances have been organised with great success at Annadorn, Dundrum, Ballykilbeg, and Aughlisnafin by Mrs. Haslett, Mrs. John M'Cammon, Miss Bell, Mrs. H. Robinson, Mrs. S. Robinson, Mrs. Hay, Mrs. Davies, Mrs. Watts, Mrs. Wilson. A Grand Concert was held on February 20th, in Clough Hall, kindly lent for the purpose. The artistes were:—Mrs. J. M'Cammon, Miss Irvine, Miss Molyneaux, Mrs. Maffett, Messrs. Bob Hogg, James Ervine, Rev. M. Watkins, Rev. J. D. Davies, and the accompanist was Mr. A. J. Parkes, Belfast. The hall was crowded, and every one of the artistes had to respond to encores. The programme was a varied and an excellent one. On March 18th a Jumble Sale was held in Seaforde Courthouse, which had been organised by Mrs. Hay, assisted by Mrs. Davies, Miss B. Ferguson, Miss Adamson, Miss Henesey, Miss Maitland, Miss Scott, Miss Wardlow, Miss M. Hay, Masters Willie, James, George Hay. The Sale was well patronised, and trade was brisk till the evening, when Mr. Fitzpatrick auctioned the res due. Conspicuous among saleable articles were large supplies of cut flowers and vegetables which had been kindly given by Geo. Allen, Esq., Mountpanther. All these various efforts are in aid of the forthforthcoming bazaar, which is to be held at the end of June.

**Comber.**—The Annual Congregational Meeting was held on March 3rd, when there was an excellent attendance of members. A very enjoyable tea provided by Mrs. T. Andrews, Ardara, was dispensed by the ladies of the congregation. Mr. J. M. Andrews, D.L., was voted to the chair. Mr. F. J. Orr submitted the Secretary's report, which spoke of good work during the year in spite of many difficulties. Mr. James Simpson, Treasurer, read the Statement of Accounts, which showed a substantial increase in the stipend collections. There was an adverse balance in the Incidental Funds accounts which were presented by Mr. R. Abernethy. The Sunday School Accounts and Poor Fund were in a good condition. Mr. Joseph Montgomery proposed that the Statement of Accounts as read be adopted and printed for circulation. This was seconded by Mr. John Niblock. Mr. Munro Ferguson proposed the reappointment of Office-Bearers, which was seconded by Mr. Jim Niblock. Mr. David Munn gave the thanks of the

congregation to the Organist and Choir and Sunday School Teachers. Mr. Pinnance and Mr. W. Morrow supported this and it was responded to by Mr. H. P. Andrews. Mr. R. Milling proposed the vote of thanks to the minister, Rev. J. Glynne Davies, and included Mrs. Davies in his resolution. Mr. James Niblock seconded this and the minister and his wife briefly responded. Mr. Frank Osborne presented the League of Loyalty Prizes to the winners for their faithfulness in attendance at Church worship. Mrs. Hugh Ferguson was thanked for again arranging the musical programme which followed the business meeting. The Rev. M. Watkins, Miss Edith Todd, Mrs. McKee, and Mrs. Hugh Ferguson contributed songs to the programme. The accompaniments were very sympathetically played by Mrs. R. Ferguson. Miss Martha Frame gave a recitation. The Sketch, entitled, "The Head Waiter," was given by Misses Dugan, J. Frame, Ella Munn, M. Smiley, and Messrs. D. Munn, J. Munn, J. O'Prey, and James Smiley. The acting was good throughout, and brought a very enjoyable programme to a close. 'God Save the King' was sung and a very successful night was concluded.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY.—The last social of the season was held by the above Society on April the 9th, in the Sunday School. The proceeds accruing from the social and lectures of the season have been spent in the purchasing of a fine piano for the Sunday School. The total amount raised was £94. The school-room was prettily decorated and when all the guests had arrived there was a very joyous and animated scene. The dances were interspersed with songs, fancy dancing, cello solos, and recitals, which were all excellently performed. Mr. Woodburn of Belfast, sang four songs in splendid style. Mrs. McRoberts sang in her usual sweet style and was encored. Miss Betty Andrews executed two Irish dances in a delightfully fresh and spontaneous manner. Mrs. R. Abernethy accompanied her at the piano. Mrs. J. M. Andrews accompanied her daughter Moirie in a cello solo. Miss Andrews had to respond to the applause with another solo. Miss McBain gave four splendid examples of her very able elocutionary powers. The Rev. Glynne Davies sang "Danny Boy," and as an encore "The Bedouin Love Song." The accompaniments to the songs were played by Miss Blakely and were sympathetically and helpfully played. Mr. Hugh Ferguson had presented a half-sovereign to be drawn for on this evening. Miss M. Andrews drew the ticket and announced the winner to be Mr. T. Morrow. The dance music which was exceptionally good was played by Mrs. R. Abernethy, Miss Todd, Mrs. Munro Ferguson, Miss Blakely, Mrs. Tilson, jun. and Mr. Spence. The programme was in the hands of Mrs. Hugh Ferguson and the best thanks of the Society have been forwarded to Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Ferguson for their very generous help. The refreshments, which were in the hands of Mr. R. Abernethy were excellent, and the gratitude of the Society is due to the many friends who have contributed refreshments to all the socials, and to the artistes who kindly gave their services.

We are very pleased to report that Mr. David Munn, of Cattogs, has been made a Justice of the Peace for the County of Down. Mr. Munn is well-deserving of the honour conferred upon him, and his many friends rejoice at this recognition of his splendid qualities. Mr. Munn is a very faithful member of our Church at Comber, and is an elder of the congregation.

**Templepatrick.**—The Annual Meeting of the Congregation was held in the Roughfort School-room, on Thursday evening, the 4th March. The attendance thereat was excellent. Owing to illness the Secretary, Mr. John B. Moore, was unable to be present, and it was decided to adjourn the business part of the meeting to a subsequent date. Proceedings commenced with tea, after which a pleasant evening of conversazione character was spent. The minister occupied the chair and reviewed the work of the past year. In many respects the outlook for the future was considered bright, particularly as they had on that occasion the pleasing duty of welcoming new members into the Church. On the other hand regret was

felt by everyone at the unavoidable removal of Dr. and Mrs. Campbell from Castle Upton, the young people especially feeling the break, as their relationships with Mrs. Campbell had been during her residence in Templepatrick of such a happy character. The hope was expressed that notwithstanding their departure, Dr. and Mrs. Campbell will be seen amongst us from time to time. This sentiment was spoken to by Messrs. Thompson, A. Birkmyre, Matthew Parker, and Arthur Reid. During the evening songs were rendered by the Misses Susie Birkmyre and Elsie Reid, and by Mr. Arthur Reid. A pleasant evening was brought to a conclusion by the pronouncement of the benediction.

DEATH.

PINKERTON.—On 16th February, at West Kirby, James Pinkerton, M.D., youngest son of the late Robert Pinkerton, Ballaghmore, Ballymoney, aged 58. Buried in Bidston Cemetery on 19th February.

## CLOUGH.

A BAZAAR will be held in the Courthouse, Seaforde, in aid of the Manse Fund, on Thursday, June 24th, 1920. An effort is being made to raise £600 to clear the debt on the newly acquired manse.

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